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GST KITTY SWELLS TO RECORD HIGH OF ₹2.43 LAKH CRORE IN APRIL

Gross GST collection rose 8.7 per cent in April as growth in import-led revenues outpaced domestic transactions, data showed on Friday

GST MOP-UP FROM IMPORTS RISES BY 25.8%

The previous all-time high GST collection was recorded in April last year at over ₹2.23 lakh crore. Gross revenues from domestic transactions were up 4.3 per cent to over ₹1.85 lakh crore, while GST mop-up from imports rose by a massive 25.8 per cent to ₹57,580 crore in April 2026. Union govt data showed refunds were up 19.3 per cent to ₹31,793 crore | P10

NEED TO INCENTIVISE LOCAL MANUFACTURING

- Total gross CGST and SGST collection in April stood at ₹52,140 crore and ₹61,331 crore, respectively. IGST mop-up was at ₹1.29 lakh cr
- EY India tax partner Saurabh Agarwal said there is a need to critically re-examine policy frameworks to incentivise domestic manufacturing and ensure 'Make in India' keeps pace with global supply chain shifts

7.3%

WAS THE JUMP IN NET GST MOP-UP AFTER ADJUSTING FOR REFUNDS

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Commercial LPG refill cost up by ₹933 a cylinder

Domestic LPG, petrol, diesel and aviation fuel price for domestic airlines untouched

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

DAYS after the latest cycle of polls in a few states ended, oil marketing companies (OMCs) on Friday passed on the global spike in fuel rates due to the West Asia crisis, to the consumers by raising the cost of commercial liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders by a whopping ₹933 per unit. They, however, left domestic LPG cylinders, petrol, diesel and aviation fuel price for domestic airlines untouched.

A 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder will now cost ₹3,071.50 in Delhi, up from ₹2,078 earlier. "Overall, approximately 80% of petroleum products have witnessed no change in prices, ensuring stability for the majority of consumers," Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) said in a statement. However, since commercial cylinders are used by hotels, restaurants, and other establishments, their impact cannot be ignored.

But OMCs said price revisions have been limited to select industrial segments, which form a small share of overall consumption and are subject to routine monthly adjustments based on global benchmarks. This includes bulk and commercial LPG cylinders (less than 1% of total consumption).

Crude oil prices in the international market have surged sharply, touching a four-year high on Thursday amid escalating tensions in West Asia and the continued blockade of the Strait of Hormuz — a critical global energy transit route. India, which imports nearly 88% of its crude oil needs, is heavily dependent on this corridor, accounting for about 40% of crude, 50% of LNG, and 90% of LPG imports. Despite this volatility, the government indicated that domestic supplies remain secure. Brent crude futures climbed to $126.41 per barrel — the highest since March 9, 2022 — while WTI crude touched $110.93 earlier in the day. Prices later eased, with Brent trading around $113 per barrel and WTI at $107 per barrel at 8.27 pm IST.

For his part, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri refuted charges that energy price may go up further in the near future as polls in several states are over. He said the energy prices are not linked to the elections.

Opposition demands rollback of LPG hike

The Opposition, including Congress, DMK, SP, and the Left parties, attacked the Narendra Modi government over the hike in the price of commercial LPG cylinders, with Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying this is an "election bill" and the next "strike" will be on petrol and diesel | P7

Spl bench to hear TMC plea on counting today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi/Kolkata

A special bench of the Supreme Court will hear on Saturday a plea filed by All India Trinamool Congress against appointment of Central Government and Central PSU employees as counting supervisors and assistants for the West Bengal Assembly elections.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Friday approached the Supreme Court seeking permission to include West Bengal government employees as counting supervisors for the upcoming assembly election results.

The move came a day after the Calcutta High Court dismissed the party's plea challenging the order by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Under the EC's directive, issued through the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer, each counting table must include at least one supervisor drawn from the Central government or a PSU. AITC had contended that appointing counting supervisors and assistants from Central Government and Central PSU employee could lead to bias and that "the fiat lacks legal basis."

Following the urgency cited by the ruling TMC, a special bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justice Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha and Justice Joymalya Bagchi has been constituted to hear the matter. The hearing is expected to begin at 8 am.

Meanwhile, EC on Friday ordered a repoll at 11 polling booths in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district's Magrahat Paschim and four booths in Diamond Harbour assembly constituencies.

Polling in these constituencies were held in the second phase elections on April 29.

The ECI said it had received 32 complaints from Falta, 29 from DH, 13 from Magrahat, and three from Budge Budge in the district. Besides Magrahat, remaining three booths fall under the TMV's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee's Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha constituency. Officials said that the complaints include allegations of EVM tampering and attempts to obstruct surveillance cameras. P8

Mumbai-Pune 'Missing Link'

- The much-awaited 13.3-km-long "Missing Link" project on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway was inaugurated by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday
- Built to bypass the steep mountain pass section, improve road safety and reduce travel distance, it connects Khopoli on the Mumbai side to Kusgaon near Lonavala in Pune dist
- The Missing Link project is expected to reduce the Mumbai-Pune travel distance by around 6 km and cut the journey time by 20 to 30 minutes, officials said

H5N1 scare in Tumakuru as samples of dead peacocks +ve

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Tumakuru

AVIAN influenza scare has hit rural Tumakuru as National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal, has confirmed that about 40 wild peacocks that died in a span of 10 days in April second week were hit by the H5N1 virus.

Six persons, mostly farmers, are being treated symptomatically and quarantined in their homes apart from 26 forest officials who had handled the carcasses.

On Friday, Deputy Commissioner Subha Kalyan held an emergency meeting with the State Epidemic Diseases Awareness Committee and district-level officials. The DC asked the people not to panic and be alert.

The death of peacocks under suspicious circumstances was reported at Kolihalli forest in Urdigere hobli on April 16.

The DC said that the district administration had immediately formed a rapid response team (RRT) and took steps to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

Five villages of Urdigere hobli including Kolihalli, Ullenahalli, Bommanahalli, Bhyirasandra, and Kallalli villages and within a 10-kilometer radius around them are under intensive surveillance.

A team of officials from departments of forest, animal husbandry, health, Gram Panchayat and revenue is createing awareness among the public.

Meat and chicken shops in the area have been closed. "H5N1 virus is a serious infection and the public needs to be vigilant. If any unusual death of chickens is found in any poultry farms, the Smart City Control Room should be informed. Since the disease is likely to spread from wildlife, it is not possible to say how it spreads. After the Kolihalli incident, there has been no report of any death of peacocks. And it is not known that this disease has spread to domestic animals," the DC said. P5

Hike to make hotel food in Bengaluru scalding hot

GAYATHRI M KURUP @ Bengaluru

GET ready to pay more for your meals as hotels across Bengaluru are contemplating revising food prices following a steep Rs 993 hike in commercial LPG rates.

The increase has pushed the price of a commercial LPG cylinder to Rs 3,152 from Rs 2,162 earlier this month and Rs 1,844 just a few months ago, triggering a concern among hotel owners.

PC Rao, president, Bruhat Bangalore Hotels Association, said the LPG price hike would hit small and medium hotel owners the hardest, as they operate on narrow profit margins and largely serve daily wage workers, auto drivers and middle-class customers. Unlike star hotels, which may have greater capacity to absorb rising operational costs, smaller eateries and roadside hotels have little room to manage such sudden increases. He said the steep rise in fuel costs has placed them under immense financial strain, making food price revision inevitable.

Rao said the hotel industry has built a reputation in Bengaluru for serving hygienic and affordable food. But maintaining that standard is becoming increasingly difficult with rising LPG and electricity costs. The burden would eventually be passed on to customers, as hotels cannot continue absorbing the losses, he warned. CONTINUED ON: P2

CM: Polls out of way, hikes in

CM Siddaramaiah said the hike was done now as the Assembly elections are over. "This is not governance - this is organised looting," he said. "What a cruel irony - on Labour Day, this is Modi's 'gift' to the working class: higher costs, shrinking incomes and more hardship" | P4

MM HILLS MISHAP

Over 20 pax hurt as KSRTC bus topples

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

AT least 20 passengers sustained injuries after a KSRTC bus overturned near Ponnachi Cross, close to Talubetta in Male Mahadeshwara Hills on Friday afternoon.

The bus from the Mysuru depot was heading to Hanur, ferrying devotees who had visited the hill shrine for the special Buddha Purnima Puja when the accident occurred. The bus was reportedly carrying over 50 passengers at the time of the accident, and the injured persons were admitted to the Hanur Taluk Hospital.

The driver lost control of the vehicle while negotiating a sharp curve on the narrow ghat road between Male Mahadeshwara Hill and Talubetta, causing the bus to topple. It happened at the Ponnachi bend, a stretch known for its difficult terrain, sources said. Over 20 passengers sustained injuries, some of them serious injuries. P3

Expect relatively cooler days in May, higher night-time temp: Met office

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

THE Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday predicted comparatively cooler days and warmer nights in May in most parts of the country. However, some parts of India, including the foothills of the Himalayas, eastern coastal states, Gujarat and Maharashtra, could experience above normal heatwaves.

Daytime temperatures will be relatively cooler than normal, as most parts of the country are expected to experience above normal pre-monsoon showers. There is also a higher possibility of the development of El Nino, which could lead to subdued monsoon conditions, impacting agriculture.

According to IMD's analysis, maximum temperatures are likely to be normal to below normal across many parts of the country, except in regions of the Southern Peninsula, Northeast and Northwest, where above-normal maximum temperatures are expected.

Conversely, many other areas, except for certain parts of Northwest India and some regions in central and Southern Peninsular India, could experience above normal minimum night time temperatures.

Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General of the IMD, explained that warmer nights are expected due to cloudy weather, which is associated with above normal rainfall predictions. "Above normal rainfall causes cloudy weather at night, which traps heat and makes the nights warmer," Mohapatra said.

Above-normal heatwave days are expected in some parts of Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, northern Uttar Pradesh, Northeast Bihar, coastal parts of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra, the IMD said.

Cyclonic circulation possible

IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said climate change is contributing to the consistent rise in temperatures and noted the possibility of cyclonic circulation in the Southeast Bay of Bengal, which could enhance rainfall activity in May

PRIDE OF PLACE

Sikkim first paperless state judiciary in India

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@ New Delhi

CHIEF Justice of India Justice Surya Kant on Friday declared Sikkim as the first paperless state judiciary in the country, while inaugurating a Conclave on Technology and Judicial Education in Gangtok.

Addressing the inaugural session of the two-day conclave, the CJI said the Indian legal landscape has moved away from the era of the paper trail, where vital records languished in physical storage, to a vibrant digital ecosystem. Digital reform, he said, is not a matter of theory, but a practical necessity for sustaining the rule of law.

"Beyond basic data collection, we have witnessed the advent of intelligent assistance within our chambers," he said, mentioning translation tool SUVAS and SUPACE, an AI-driven tool designed to assist judges.

These innovations act as force multipliers, he said, aiding in the swift translation of judgments and providing rapid research to the bench. "They relieve the judge of mechanical burden of routine inquiry," the CJI said.

Justice Surya Kant also spoke about the role of Artificial Intelligence in improving efficiency in trial courts, including in managing cases, verifying assets and ensuring consistency in sentencing. He urged judicial academies to go beyond basic digital training and also teach judges and legal professionals about the ethical use of newer technologies.

Chief Justice of the Sikkim High Court Justice A Muhammed Mustaque, Sri Lankan SC judge Mohammad Dhilip Nawaz and Seychelles Supreme Court CJ Rony James Govinden were present, among others.

AI can be used to identify patterns for judges

CJI Surya Kant said AI systems can be deployed to identify patterns in sentencing and bail practices, to promote greater consistency and predictability. "The modern judge must also engage with the logic that underpins emerging technologies," the CJI said

EXPRESS READ

Kharge: Meeting soon to decide on leadership issue

Kalaburagi: The Congress top brass has not yet taken any decision on political issues of Karnataka, clarified AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge here on Friday. He said former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, LoP Rahul Gandhi and himself would hold a meeting to discuss the issues. He said the date of the meeting has not been decided yet | P4

Rahul, Nissanka fuel DC's seven-wicket win over RR

Jaipur: A wonderful exhibition of batting by KL Rahul (75) and Pathum Nissanka (62) overshadowed Riyan Parag's redemptive 90, powering Delhi Capitals to a seven-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in the IPL match on Friday. Parag's 50-ball blitz led Royals to a competitive 225 for six. But, Delhi Capitals reached 226 for three | P11

Khera gets bail in Himanta's wife row

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has granted Congress leader Pawan Khera anticipatory bail in connection with the FIR registered on the complaint by CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, over his allegation that she held multiple passports and property abroad. Thursday's order of the SC was uploaded on its website on Friday | P7